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MAQUOKETA

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IN THIS ISSUE

Siblings share love of Cardinal basketball

Pages 8-9

Local

Pages 2-3

Family

Pages 4-6

Sports

Pages 8-9

Obituaries

Page 13

Agri/Business

Pages 14-15

Classifieds

Buyer's Guide

SUPPLEMENTS

- Aldi

■ Fareway

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Leisure Lake project loses large grant

**By DOUGLAS MELVOLD**

Jackson County officials and administrators who have been administering funding for construction of a sewage system at Leisure Lake were scrambling last week to save two grants that, if lost, could doom the long-sought project.

The county Board of Supervisors was told last week that one of three grants that were intended to finance the project has been withdrawn and another will be terminated at the end of the year.

The project is intended to design and construct a centralized sewage collection and treatment system for residents at Leisure Lake, a rural subdivision in western Jackson County.

Residents now have individual septic systems. The supervisors have received complaints that some residences use holding tanks or barrels and that some septic systems drain onto the ground.

Kelley Deutmeyer, executive director of the East Central Intergovernmental Association of Dubuque, which is administering the grant, other ECIA officials and Frank Frieberg, county sanitarian, met with the supervisors on Feb. 24 to review the status of the project.

Deutmeyer said a \$237,000 community development block grant was withdrawn when it was not used after an 18-month period that ended Oct. 31, 2008.

Officials were counting on that grant, along with a \$500,000 watershed improvement grant awarded through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and a \$2.3 million loan and grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to finance the project.

Half of the USDA funding would be in the form of a grant and the other half would be a loan. The loan would be repaid with revenue from user fees, under the plan.

When completed, residents would be required to hook up to the system. They would pay a monthly user fee, with rates to be set. The USDA has recommended that rates be at least \$40 a month, ECIA officials said.

In addition to the community development block grant expiring, the \$500,000 state watershed improvement grant is in jeopardy because those funds also will be withdrawn if the project is not complete and all bills paid by the end of the year.

The most recent plans call for construction to begin this fall and continue next year.

Deutmeyer said the project has been delayed because project engineers have not had access to the site on which the sewage treatment system would be built.

She said engineers identified a preferred site, but that property owner refused to allow access to the land for engineers to take soil samples.

She said engineers approached two other property owners, who had sites that also may be suitable, but they also refused access.

After those refusals, she said planners turned their attention back to the original site.

Officials then considered initiating eminent domain proceedings to gain access to the land. The supervisors in January approved a request to direct county Attorney Chris Raker to initiate eminent domain proceedings on approximately eight acres of land adjoining Leisure Lake owned by Thomas Kurt of Bernard.

A hearing on the eminent domain action is scheduled for March 17 in Jackson County District Court.

A group called the Eastern Iowa Regional Utility Service System, or EIRUSS, which is planning the sewer system, made the eminent domain request to the supervisors.

Frieberg said the Kurt-owned property is the site most preferred by engineers.

The delay in getting on the site has held up design of

■ PROJECT,

Please turn to page 2



MSP photo by Kelly Gerlach

**Catholic Daughters of the Americas** of Sacred Heart Church, Maquoketa donated proceeds from its second fundraiser to help build a facility for Hospice of Jackson County. The group raised more than \$1,600 during its third annual wine-tasting event. Shown are, front row from left, Viola Kilburg, Joan Delagardelle, Lisa Clark and Lisa Melloy. In back are Rose Franzen, Kim Callahan, Laurie Steines, Patti Hamilton and Sharon Dunne.

JC Hospice is building funds

**By KELLY GERLACH**

For the third consecutive year, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas from Sacred Heart Church of Maquoketa have donated a sizeable amount of money to help others requesting special in-home care.

The local group raised \$1,670 during its third annual wine tasting event, held Feb. 8 at Costello's Old Mill Reception Hall, Maquoketa. Individuals 21 and older sampled a variety of wines from Brush Creek Winery of Andrew, Park Farm Winery & Vineyard of Bankston and Daly Creek Winery & Bistro of Anamosa. They also enjoyed performances by local musicians Scott and Michelle Dalziel.

Organizers said more people patronized the event than in years past. However, the overall net proceeds from the event were down about \$60 from the previous year.

To date, the Catholic Daughters has raised

more than \$5,200 for the hospice house

Hospice of Jackson County plans to build a seven-bed hospice facility in BiCentennial Park.

The building project is estimated to cost well over \$1.4 million.

Lisa Melloy, director, said Hospice is still working with architects on the project.

"(Fundraising) has been slow. We're planning the campaign fund," she said.

"The sad thing is we've got people that can use the hospice house now."

No construction timeline has been set.

Hospice of Jackson County has served hundreds of patients since becoming certified in September of 2003. It is currently headquartered inside the former Medical Associates office on West Quarry Street. Hospice offers mental, physical, emotional and spiritual assistance for patients and their families.

\$85,000 loan awarded

**By DOUGLAS MELVOLD**

One down, two to go.

The Iowa Department of Economic Development notified Maquoketa city officials this week that the city has been awarded an \$85,000 forgivable loan to help finance clean-up of the downtown fire debris.

The funding is the amount the city had requested through the state agency's Brownfield Redevelopment Program.

Matt Rasmussen, program manager, said on Monday, March 2, that the city must provide upfront funding. The loan proceeds will be provided to reimburse the city.

The loan will be forgiven if the city meets terms of the agreement.

He said state officials will negotiate with the city to come up with a schedule and completion date for the clean-up project.

The forgivable loan is one of three funding sources from which the city has applied to help finance clean-up of the debris from the January 2008 South Main Street fire

that destroyed three downtown commercial properties.

In addition to the IDED forgivable loan, the city has been notified of tentative approval and is awaiting final word on its request for a \$25,000 grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

In coming weeks the city also expects to hear the results of its application for \$200,000 in funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

That grant request faces more competition than the two state requests.

City officials are hoping that the forgivable loan and the two grants, if awarded, along with insurance proceeds that are being assigned to the city, will cover the cost of the remaining demolition and clean-up of the debris-filled site.

Clean-up costs will be higher than an ordinary clean-up project because DNR officials

■ LOAN,

Please turn to page 2